



Latah Economic Development Council

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Department of Water Resources

January 29, 2004

Karl J. Dreher, Director
Idaho Department of Water Resources
1301 North Orchard
Boise, Idaho 83706

Director Dreher:

On February 2, 2004, you will hold a public meeting to receive testimony concerning the possibility of declaring the City of Moscow and parts of Latah County a Critical Groundwater Area – 42-233A or a Groundwater Management Area - 42-233B. The Latah Economic Development Council believes that neither designation is appropriate.

The Palouse Basin Aquifer Committee (PBAC) has been working across State lines to study and conserve the groundwater in Whitman and Latah Counties. As you know, Groundwater Management Areas are designed to study, protect, and enhance the viability of groundwater for years to come. We here on the Palouse have an unprecedented decade long history of working together to collect data and provide input to local governments on water policies. PBAC has been an important tool in providing scientific data and policy direction for water study and conservation on the Palouse. The 1992 PBAC Local Groundwater Management Plan through local cooperation has been responsible for the following; the City of Moscow changing its pumping protocol by decreasing the amount of water removed from the Grande Ronde Aquifer and utilizing the recharging Wanapum Aquifer; the University of Idaho's use of reclaimed water for the arboretum, golf course and all irrigation on campus; more accurate models of the Grande Ronde Aquifer; collection of scientific data on water consumption in the region; and other similar programs designed to address the study and implementation of conservation programs. The Idaho Department of Water Resources has always been an active participant in PBAC. The Latah Economic Development Council believes that the IDWR input into the PBAC Local Groundwater Management Plan will continue to be a necessary part in protecting our groundwater, however, at this time there is no scientific basis for declaring any part of Moscow or Latah County a Critical Groundwater Area or Groundwater Management Area.

Furthermore, making any declaration would be premature and have a negative impact on the economic growth and viability of Moscow and Latah County. Moscow has maintained a steady and healthy 1% to 1.5% growth rate per annum for more than a decade.

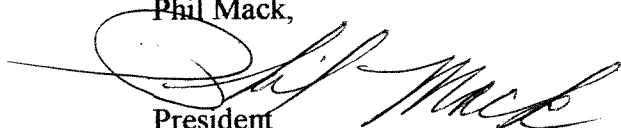
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This slow and steady growth is expected to continue for the next decade and has allowed the area to balance economic development with the conservation of natural resources. Our local elected officials have always considered all impacts of economic development and housing developments, including, but not limited to the impact on water resources and quality of life. We are confident that our elected officials will continue to protect and conserve our groundwater.

If you need any additional information or have any questions, please call Barbara Richardson Crouch or me at (208) 885-3801.

Phil Mack,

President

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Phil Mack", written over a horizontal line.